

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Davis-Adcock Store

Wilbon, Wake County, WA0548, Listed 9/6/2006
Nomination by Beth Keane
Photographs by Beth Keane, June 2006



Overall view



Rear and side view

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name Davis-Adcock Store

other names/site number W. W. Davis Store, John C. Adcock Store

2. Location

2013 Piney Grove-Wilbon Road; East side of Piney Grove-Wilbon Road, 0.2 miles north of
street & number intersection of Wilbon Road not for publication N/A

city or town Wilbon vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27540

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination
request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets
does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X
locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional
comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

 entered in the National Register

 See continuation sheet.

 determined eligible for the

National Register

 See continuation sheet.

 determined not eligible for the

National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain): _____

Davis-Adcock Store
Name of Property

Wake County, NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

 X building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County,
North Carolina (ca. 1770-1941)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: department store
GOVERNMENT post office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

[illegible]

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Parapet front store

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

roof Metal

walls Weatherboard

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Davis-Adcock Store
Name of Property

Wake County, NC
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or a grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Commerce
Government

Period of Significance

1906-1956

Significant Dates

1906

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Davis-Adcock Store
Name of Property

Wake County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 17 695740 3941880
2 _____

Zone Easting Northing
3 _____
4 _____
____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Beth Keane

organization Retrospective date March, 2006

street & number 21 Market Street, #3 telephone 910-815-1096

city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28401

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name E. Brantley and Patricia Adcock

street & number 2105 Piney Grove-Wilbon Road telephone 919-552-5048

city or town Holly Springs state NC zip code 27540-9261

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Davis-Adcock Store
Wake County, NC

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The 1906 Davis-Adcock Store is located in Wilbon, a rural community about thirty miles southwest of Raleigh and approximately three miles southwest of Fuquay-Varina. The one-story frame store sits on a quarter-acre lot, facing west, on the east side of Piney Grove-Wilbon Road (State Route 1101), 0.2 miles north of the intersection of Wilbon Road (State Route 1110). The community, located in Holly Springs Township, currently consists of the store and a small number of early-twentieth-century houses with spacious yards situated on either side of Piney Grove-Wilbon Road. Fields planted in soybeans, cotton, and corn fan out from the locality. At the time the store was built, the Durham and Southern Railroad tracks ran behind the store and a number of railroad worker's houses were clustered nearby. The tracks have long since been removed and the workers' houses are no longer extant.

The Davis-Adcock Store is a frame, gable-front building, with a standing-seam metal roof and a stepped-parapet false front. The rectangular building, resting on short brick piers, measures approximately twenty-two by fifty feet and is clad with German siding. A metal-clad, shed-roof porch, supported by sturdy cedar posts resting on concrete piers in front of the concrete porch floor, spans the front of the store. Central double-leaf, five-panel wood doors are surmounted by a nine-pane transom. Large, twenty-pane windows covered with bars flank either side of the door. Vertical tongue-and-groove boards under the windows add a touch of architectural interest to the façade. Two gas pumps, formerly located in front of the store, have been removed.

The east (rear) gable end features a pedimented gable clad with patterned wood shingles. A central east-elevation window has been boarded up. A former brick chimney positioned on the east gable end has been removed.

The north and south elevations of the store each have a single door with five horizontal panels. The steps in front of the doors have been removed. The north elevation has a boarded-up window east of the door, while the south elevation has two windows on either side of the door, one of which has been boarded up; the other retains the six-over-six sash configuration. The store's exterior paint scheme is the same as it always has been, the German siding is painted white, while the porch and front windows are accented with blue and red trim.

The interior of the store is divided into three spaces. The large front room was the commercial area where all the store business took place. The two rear rooms were added several years after the store was built, and were residential in function. The door located on the north elevation opens into the commercial space, while the door on the south elevation enters into a rear room.

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The front room retains the original wood floors and tongue-and-groove pine boards covering the walls. The ceiling is also clad with the original diagonal tongue-and-groove pine boards. A large wooden counter where goods were bought and sold remains, along with a wall full of shelves that once held all the merchandise a country store would need. A six-foot-high, coal-burning, pot-bellied stove still sits in the center of the room. The two rear rooms also retain the original wood floors and tongue-and-groove pine boards covering the walls.

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Davis-Adcock Store
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1906 Davis-Adcock Store meets National Register Criterion A for commerce and government. The simple one-story frame store was the principal commercial establishment for the Wilbon community for over half a century. The independently-operated store stocked a wide variety of general merchandise to meet the needs of the rural Wilbon community. The Davis-Adcock Store reflects the growth and prosperity of Wake County during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the railroad opened up trade, travel, and business opportunities. The advent of the automobile continued this trend of making distant farmers markets and formerly isolated areas more accessible. The community store served not only as a local distribution center for goods and services, but also as a center of community social life. It also housed the local post office from 1906 until 1925. Originally owned by William W. Davis, the store was purchased by John C. Adcock and James Elbert Matthews in 1923. Three years later, John Adcock bought out his business partner and continued to operate the store until 1967. The period of significance ends in 1956 as the continued use of the building after 1956 is not exceptionally significant.

The Davis-Adcock Store also meets Criterion C for architecture as a well-preserved and distinctive example of the rural country stores that proliferated in eastern North Carolina in the first decades of the twentieth century. The exterior features a stepped parapet false front, double-leaf wooden doors flanked by large multi-paned display windows, and a front porch supported by cedar posts.

The architectural significance of the Davis-Adcock Store is established in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "*Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (ca. 1770-1941)*" by Kelly A. Lally. Historic context for the store is presented in Section E, "Context 3: Populism to Progressivism (1885-1918)" and "Context 4: Boom, Bust, and Recovery between the World Wars (1919-1941)" (E.65-77). The Davis-Adcock Store is described in Section F under Property Type 5: Commercial and Transportation-Related Buildings and Structures. The store displays a high degree of integrity from the period of significance as required by the registration requirements for Wake County commercial and transportation related structures stipulated on pages F.159-160.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT CONTEXT

The community of Wilbon was named for Stephen G. Wilbon, who with his wife, Etna, owned a seventy-one-acre farm at the center of the community at the turn of the twentieth century. The town grew up around the Durham and Southern Railroad in the early twentieth century. Once a thriving village with a post office located in the Davis-Adcock Store, a depot,

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Davis-Adcock Store
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railroad employee housing, and several stores, this small community is now comprised of a few houses and the Davis-Adcock Store building (Lally, pp. 356-57).

The Davis-Adcock Store was built by William W. Davis in the first decade of the twentieth century. Davis had married Nancy A. Akins on September 18, 1904 in Holly Springs (Wake County marriage records). On December 11, 1905, the Cape Fear and Northern Railway Company, which was built in 1898 and bought out by the Durham and Southern Railroad in 1906, sold slightly over one acre of land to W. W. Davis for \$40.00. The parcel was described as being in the Holly Springs township, near the depot at Wilbon Station. The tract was adjacent to Stephen G. Wilbon's property along what was then known as Fishdam Road (Deed Book 203, p. 208). Davis erected the store soon after acquiring the property from the railroad. Wilbon's daughter, Eva and his wife Etna, served alternately as postmaster with an office in a corner of the store from 1906 through 1917. The 1910 Federal population census reveals that William and Nancy Davis were operating the store at that time. They held onto the property until 1923 when they sold the business to John C. Adcock and James E. Matthews (Deed Book 424, p. 290). After two intermediate postmasters from 1918 to 1922, John C. Adcock served as postmaster from 1923 to 1925, after which the post office in the store was discontinued.

John Calvin Adcock, the son of Stephen Brantley Adcock and Etta Mae Pyle Adcock, was born on March 20, 1899 in a home adjacent to the store property (Wake County Vital Statistics). The 1910 population census lists Stephen B. Adcock, age 36, as a section master for the Durham and Southern Railroad. His family included his wife, Etta, age 29, and children: John C., (age 11), Jesse (age 9), Fannie (age 7), Fred (age 5), Tildon (age 3), and Sterling (age 2). Three more children were added to the family by 1920: Liv, Spurlow, and Lois.

John C. Adcock reported in an August 6, 1969 article for the *Raleigh News and Observer* that he started in the mercantile business in 1919, working out of an old smokehouse in Wilbon. On January 23, 1924, Adcock married Clara E. Matthews (b. 1904), the daughter of his business partner (Wake County Vital Statistics). The 1925 Wake County tax lists identified John C. Adcock, age 26, as owning \$120 worth of personal property including one hog valued at \$20.00. Adcock became sole owner of the Davis-Adcock Store in 1926, when he bought out Matthew's interest in the business (Deed Book 495, p. 109). According to his son, E. Brantley, John Adcock added two rooms, a kitchen and a bedroom, to the back of the store. He and his wife moved into the two small rooms and lived there for the next ten years. There was no running water and the family depended on a well behind the building for their water needs. John and Clara Adcock had three children, Evan Joyce (b. 1930), Nell Wanda (b. 1932), and Elbert Brantley (b. 1935), all born in the back bedroom of the store (Adcock interview, August 31, 2005).

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Davis-Adcock Store
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On February 16, 1932, John C. Adcock purchased 71.40 acres for \$450.00, described as being on Holly Springs Road about three miles from the town of Fuquay Springs near Wilbon Station on the Durham and Southern Railroad (Deed Book 629, p. 230). This was the same farm that the Wilbon family had purchased in 1891. Apparently, the Wilbons had run into some financial problems during the Depression and the property was sold at auction. John C. Adcock moved his family into a new home, adjacent to the store, in 1937.

John Adcock also was quoted in the 1969 *Raleigh News and Observer* article that in the early days he sold kerosene, that was “redder than a firecracker.” He bought his grocery supplies from Garland Norris in Apex and said that they were delivered by horse and buggy. According to his son, E. Brantley Adcock, in addition to the usual food stocks, the store had penny candy cases, a fish box for fresh fish and bait, molasses barrels, an ice box holding “ice-cold coca-colas,” homemade ice cream, and some farm supplies, including overalls, work gloves, seed, garden tools, etc. Adcock was also a dealer in Standard Oil Company products for more than forty-two years and had two gasoline pumps in front of the store. Almost all of their business was done on credit, with bills being paid once a year at harvest time. The store was a favorite meeting place for the community, as well, with local news exchanged around the pot belly stove located in the middle of the store.

It was common during the early decades of the twentieth century for the local citizens to stop in the store once a day to pick up their mail from the post office located in a corner of the store (Adcock interview, Aug 31, 2005). Country stores often served as a location for a post office during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Many small stores were partially supported by the necessity of periodic visits of rural citizens to pick up their mail. The post office in the Davis-Adcock Store was referred to as “Walthall” and operated from 1906 to 1925. The advent of rural mail home delivery along with reorganization of the post office department in the 1920s and 30s created larger facilities in centralized locations and eventually made the country store locations obsolete.

Packaging or wrapping at the local stores did not exist. Customers brought their own containers and supplies had to be weighed or measured from bulk by the storekeeper. Most food supplies were either dried or salt-preserved and delivered to merchants in boxes, crates, kegs, buckets, or hogsheads. Flour, sugar, salt, honey, and molasses are among the items that were kept in barrels or bins behind the counter (Adcock interview, August 31, 2005).

A big, circular, potbellied stove was situated in a prominent position in the center of the Davis-Adcock Store. The stove served not only the practical function of providing warmth for the store, but also acted as the cold-weather community gathering point for discussions ranging from religion to politics to weather, as well as community issues. In warm weather, the

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discussions moved to the front porch, also an ideal place for whittling, chewing tobacco, and a game of checkers (Adcock interview, August 31, 2005).

The 1930s and 40s brought additional changes to the store. The benefits derived from public utilities and improved working methods provided the country dweller with more leisure time and more disposable income. Refrigeration, canning, and the introduction of foreign food during the 1940s resulted in the selling of such items as pizza pies, salami, chow mein and many other products that were previously unheard of. In order to survive, the country store had to carry a larger inventory, deal in credit, and provide good storage and display facilities.

All John and Clara Adcock's children helped out in the store as they were growing up. Their son, E. Brantley, worked in the store after returning from military service. He married Patricia Dale Powell on September 18, 1960 (Wake County Vital Statistics). He and his wife raised their family in Wilbon and several family members remain in the vicinity. The John C. Adcock Store closed its doors in 1967 (Adcock interview, August 31, 2005). John C. Adcock's wife, Clara, died five year later on July 13, 1972 at the age of the sixty-seven. John C. Adcock died on September 2, 1985 at the age of eighty-six (Wake County Vital Statistics). The store building remains in the Adcock family and is currently used as storage space.

COMMERCE CONTEXT

The commercial historic context for the store is presented in Section E, "Context 3: Populism to Progressivism (1885-1918)" (E.46-64) and "Context 4: Boom, Bust, and Recovery between the World Wars (1919-1941)" (E.65-77).

Small country stores in Wake County are becoming increasingly rare. Chain food stores, with lower prices and wider selection became firmly entrenched in most small towns. Five and Ten stores took over the market for gadgets and incidentals. In addition, mail-order houses and national advertising made the housewife brand conscious. The few remaining rural stores in Wake County are a reminder of a simpler time when neighbors would congregate around a pot belly stove on a winter day or a front porch on a hot summer day. The country store acted as a gathering place where they could catch up on local news, pick up their mail, and purchase a few items to supplement what was produced at home by their own labor.

ARCHITECTURE CONTEXT

The architectural significance of the Davis-Adcock Store is established in Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (ca. 1770-194)," by Kelly Lally. Context for the store is presented in "Context 4:

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Boom, Bust, and Recovery between the World Wars (1919-1941)" (E.65-77) and in Property Type 5: Commercial and Transportation-Related Buildings and Structures (F.154-156).

Most of Wake County's extant rural and small community store buildings are one- or two-story frame structures with gable-front or hip roofs, some with false fronts. The fake facades, which extended upward and hid the shingled, gable roofs, offered the one opportunity for uniqueness of design. The tall false front gave a vertical look to an otherwise square building and became the identifying mark of such structures throughout the rural countryside. Wood frame weatherboard construction permitted easy expansion as business increased, and wings and sheds were often added to the sides and backs for stocking supplies and implements. Front porches were also a familiar feature of the stores, serving as an outdoor forum for the discussion of local matters and community gossip. Commonly located at a crossroads location, virtually all were independently operated, and many had gasoline service facilities available in front of the store. The majority of the early frame buildings have been closed for a number of years.

The Davis-Adcock Store, built during the first decade of the twentieth century, closely resembles other extant rural stores in Wake County built around the turn of the twentieth century. Becoming increasingly rare, the remaining frame stores attest to the importance of the rural general store during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Similar to the Davis-Adcock Store, the first section of the Carpenter Store, built in ca. 1895 by William Henry Carpenter, is a one-story, frame, gable-front commercial building with a front porch, that served the needs of a rural crossroads community (Carpenter Historic District National Register Nomination, 2000).

The ca. 1890 J. R. Nowell Store, located in Wendell, is a one-story, two-room, gable-front frame building with weatherboard siding, and double-leaf front paneled doors flanked by four-over-four sash windows. Like many of the early rural stores, including the Davis-Adcock Store and the Carpenter Store, the Nowell Store also housed the local post office (Lally, p. 237).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Bibliography

Adcock, E. Brantley and Patricia interview with Beth Keane, August 31, 2005, Wilbon, NC.

Federal Population Census for 1910 for Holly Springs Township, Wake County, NC. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

Harrison, Jim. *Country Stores*. Marietta, GA: Longstreet Press, Inc., 1993.

Kearins, John C. *The Country Store, Yesterday and Today.*” The News and Observer. Raleigh, NC. 6 August 1967, pp. 1, 6.

Lally, Kelly. *The Historic Architecture of Wake County, North Carolina*. Raleigh: Wake County Government, 1994.

Lally, Kelly and Todd Johnson. *Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (ca. 1770-1941)*. National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form. North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch, 1993.

Wake County Deed Books, Office of Register of Deeds, Wake County Courthouse Annex, Raleigh, NC

Wake County Tax List for Holly Springs Township, 1925, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC.

Wake County Vital Statistics Record Books, Wake County Courthouse Annex, Raleigh, NC.

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Davis-Adcock Store
Wake County, NC

Section 10: Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the nominated property coincide with the boundaries delineated for parcel 0647832344 on the accompanying Wake County tax map. The lot measures 62 feet on the west side, 161 feet on the north and south sides, and 68 feet on the east side.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the property historically associated with the Davis-Adcock Store.

Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs:

Name of Property: Davis-Adcock Store
Location: Wake County, North Carolina
Address: 2013 Pine Grove Wilbon Road, Wilbon
Name of Photographer: Beth Keane
Photograph Date: June, 2006
Location of Negative: North Carolina HPO

Photographs:

Photo 1: Façade (west); camera looking east
Photo 2: Oblique (east and north elevations); camera looking southwest
Photo 3: Interior ceiling
Photo 4: Interior view
Photo 5: Façade and south elevation; camera looking northeast